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Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 22 March 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee

I have the honour to attach herewith a copy of the note verbale dated 22 March 2010, addressed to the United States Mission to the United Nations (see annex), related to new dangerous and provocative incidents that endanger the security of the Permanent Mission of Cuba and its staff and impede the normal performance of the functions of the Mission of Cuba.

I request you kindly to circulate this letter and its attachment as a document of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(Signed) Rodolfo **Benitez Verson**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Cuba to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 22 March 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the Committee

The Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United States Mission to the United Nations and has the honour to refer to two new dangerous and provocative incidents caused by a group of persons in front of the Mission of Cuba on Thursday, 18 March 2010.

It is a matter of great concern that the new incidents took place less than 20 days after a similar one occurred, as denounced by the Mission of Cuba in its note dated 1 March 2010, addressed to the United States Mission.

On 18 March, at 17:35, a group of around 15 to 20 persons arrived at the main entrance of the Mission of Cuba and began to make a lot of noise, shouting offensive and insulting slogans, making threatening gestures, and urging the staff of the Cuban Mission to come outside for physical confrontation. This time, they not only placed numerous offensive posters at the main entrance of the Mission and exterior windows on Lexington Avenue, but also tried to introduce objects inside the Mission, seriously compromising the security of the Mission.

The group remained at the main entrance of the Mission for nearly 20 minutes, thus blocking the free passage of Cuban personnel and interfering in the performance of the Mission, at hours when the Cuban diplomatic staff is returning to the Mission's building, after working in the United Nations Headquarters, or leaving to go home.

At 17:54, the New York police arrived and left the site at 18:10, 17 minutes later, despite the fact that at that time there was still some members of the provocative group in the surroundings of the Mission, who left only at 18:26.

The second incident occurred that day at 20:10, when the same group again blocked the entrance of the Mission. On this occasion, apart from interrupting once again the normal functioning of the Mission, and the work of the staff by making a lot of noise, shouting offensive and insulting slogans and making threatening gestures, they placed, for around half an hour, a projector pointing a powerful light at the walls and the windows of the apartments and offices of the Mission.

This time, the New York police only arrived at the place around 10 minutes after the incident was over, at 20:35, despite having been informed about it immediately.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba wishes to stress once more that these hostile actions constitute flagrant violations of the procedures established in the United States Mission's note of 9 June 1995 aiming to eliminate potential clashes and conditions considered as interference with the performance of the functions of the Mission of Cuba.

As the United States Government knows, many well-known terrorists and criminals of Cuban origin walk freely in its streets. This situation and the failure of the United States authorities to comply with their responsibilities to properly protect the diplomatic personnel accredited in this country endanger the security of the Mission of Cuba and its staff and impede the normal performance of the functions of the Mission.

The Mission of Cuba reiterates that the dangerous incidents that occurred both on 28 February and 18 March 2010 are not at all isolated, and that the unilateral decision taken in November 2007 by the United States authorities of removing the police protection from the Mission not only facilitates but also encourages such illegal and hostile activities against the Mission and its staff.

The United States Government will be solely responsible for any violent incident resulting from the impunity with which it allows violent groups to threaten the security of the Mission of Cuba. The United States, in its capacity as Host Country of the United Nations, must strictly abide by the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 18 April 1961 and the Headquarters Agreement between the United States and the United Nations, as well as to adopt measures deriving from its own legislation against these violent individuals.

The Mission of Cuba once again demands that the United States authorities guarantee the security and physical integrity of the Mission of Cuba and its staff.

The Mission of Cuba requests the United States Mission to inform at the earliest possible time about the measures taken or to be taken by the United States authorities in order to comply with their obligations.